

John C. Little Award Goes to Dennis Cook

Going the extra mile for young people is one important way Dennis Cook gives back to the community—and the main reason that Dennis received the 2004 John C. Little Spirit Award.

The award is given every year to the Parks and Recreation employee who best embodies the spirit of former Board member and community leader, the late John C. Little, Sr., whose motto was: "To improve the life of all people, you must improve the life of young people."

Little served as a member of the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners from 1990-1997. Through a long career and a lifetime of community service, he created and developed opportunities for young people through the formation of the Central Area Youth Association, and his involvement in 4-H and other programs.

Dennis Cook, who heads the Parks Athletics Office and staffs the Sports Advisory Council, displays a similar passion for nurturing and mentoring young people. "It is not just a matter of his work in the Department but that his work is an

extension of his life," says co-worker Lori Chisholm. "Whether through his church, his efforts to champion for young people, his volunteer efforts, or his work, in big and small ways, Dennis makes the lives of young people better and helps them realize their own potential."

The award was especially meaningful for Dennis who knew and worked with John



Dennis Cook

Little and considered him a career and personal mentor. "Receiving this honor was special considering all that Mr. Little did for me and others," Dennis says. "I feel like his legacy is living on."

Some examples of Dennis's work over the years include:

- Creating work internships in the Citywide Athletic Office for young people

(Continued on page 3)

Ken's Corner

Happy New Year

A belated happy new year to all!

While the new year brings a renewed commitment to achieving our mission even more efficiently and effectively, we also face significant changes.

Chief among them are the retirements of key personnel. On my management team both Recreation Support director Herbye White and Aquarium director Bill Artnz recently retired. Herbye finished a distinguished 38-year career in parks and recreation, including six years as department director in Oakland, and a charter member of the National Recreation and Park Ethnic Minority Society. Herbye's career with Seattle Parks and Recreation has been eventful, highlighted by his leadership on developing sports fields to help meet the city's burgeoning demand for such facilities. In Bill Artnz's five years at the Aquarium helm, the Aquarium increased attendance by 16 percent to a record in 2004. The Aquarium also increased revenues by \$800,000 over the past three years.

I will miss both Herbye and Bill's sage advice and leadership.

Two other key members of our management team are retiring soon: Sarah Welch, director of our finance and administration division, and Kerry Lasko, a veteran recreation

(Continued on page 3)

Annual Meeting On Feb. 28

The 2005 ARC Annual General Meeting will be held at the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center on Monday, Feb. 28, 2005.

Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. with dinner at 6 p.m. This year ARC will pay for two advisory council members from each council. The cost for additional dinner reservations is \$25 per person. Also, this year there will be van transportation to and from the AGM leaving from eight locations throughout the city. The van transportation is by RSVP only.

Please RSVP for the AGM dinner to Bill Keller at 206-684-7083 or bill.keller@seattle.gov by

Feb. 18, 2005.

Celebrating the Advisory Council System

Have you ever stopped to think about the huge impact that our advisory council system has on the communities of Seattle?

Advisory councils enrich and support the lives of the citizens of Seattle on a daily basis in many ways. Many advisory councils partner with community groups to create or improve parks, playgrounds, facilities and programs throughout the city. In these partnerships, advisory councils may provide support in planning, grant application and invoicing, general accounting, and fund-raising. Following are just a few of the many examples of these partnerships:

- Meadowbrook Advisory Council and the Friends of Annie's Playground renovated and expanded the playground near Meadowbrook Community Center.
- Bitter Lake Advisory Council and the Friends of Pinehurst Playfield expanded and updated this playground and playfield.
- Magnolia Advisory Council and the Friends of Karen's Playground renovated and updated this playground.
- Alki Advisory Council and the Friends of Alki Bathhouse completed an extensive bathhouse renovation project.
- Queen Anne Advisory Council and the Friends of 4th and Ward Park transformed an old pump house and the surrounding property into a community park.
- Rainier Beach Advisory Council and the Friends of Beer Sheva Park are beginning a project to update this park.
- Alki Advisory Council and the Friend of Whale Tail Park are beginning a project to expand this park.

Another area where advisory councils have had an impact on the community is the ARC Opportunity Fund. This fund is used to provide grants to advisory councils to fund community projects for which other funding may not be available. Seventeen advisory councils and ARC donated money to the ARC Opportunity Fund in 2004. These Opportunity Fund donations were used to fund projects such as computer labs, leadership training for teens and discovery kits to provide educational experiences for children.

ARC and the following advisory councils made generous donations to the Opportunity Fund in 2004: Alki, Ballard, Bitter Lake, Carkeek Park, Delridge, Discovery Park, Hiawatha, Jefferson, Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, Laurelhurst, Loyal Heights, Magnolia, Rainier, Rainier Beach, Ravenna Eckstein, South Park, and Yesler.

The advisory council system is strong and vital and we make a difference in our communities every day of the week. Many thanks to all of you for the part you play in this unique and exciting partnership with ARC and Seattle Parks and Recreation.

—Anna Martin, Associated Recreation Council Board President

African Americans and Seattle Parks and Recreation

February is Black History Month, and a great time to recognize the many contributions African Americans have made to the history and development of the city and Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Currently, for instance, Parks is working on several park improvement projects on parks named after prominent African Americans.

Homer Harris Park, at 2401 E. Howell St., is named after one of Seattle's most respected athletes and physicians, Dr. Homer E. Harris.

Harris starred for Garfield High School's football and track teams in the early 1930s and went on to earn All-American honors as a football player at the University of Iowa. Harris later became one of the city's most prominent and beloved dermatologists.

We bought the land for a Central Area park named after Dr. Harris with an unprecedented gift of \$1.3 million from an anonymous donor. In partnership with the Seattle Parks Foundation, Parks is developing the site into a neighborhood park with paths, greenery and a children's play area. The new park will open this spring.

In Southeast Seattle, Parks is using funding from the 2000 Pro Parks Levy to bring significant improvements to **Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park**. Improvements to the park, located at 2200 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S, include park furniture, paths, landscaping and educational/interpretive elements about the life and legacy of Dr. King. The improvements are scheduled to be complete by the end of 2005.

Also in Southeast Seattle, **John C. Little Park** is taking shape. Located at 37th Ave. S, between S Holly St. and S Myrtle St., the newly acquired park is named after John C. Little (see article on page 1). To be completed in 2006, the improvements include a plaza, paths, a water play feature, picnic facilities, and a small community garden.

The celebration of Black History Month would not be complete without mention of the **Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center** and its namesake, famed African American writer Langston Hughes. Mr. Hughes was a brilliant poet, novelist, playwright, and essayist during the Harlem Renaissance in New York City.

To celebrate his life and work, the **Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center** is presenting a fundraiser, "Illuminating Langston" on Sunday, Feb. 13, 5 to 8 p.m., at the Center, 104 17th Ave. S. The evening will feature internationally acclaimed artists in support of the Center, including



Ken Bounds and Homer Harris

Sir Mix Alot, Ernestine Anderson and Julian Priester.

The African American legacy at Seattle Parks and Recreation is a lasting one. The former leader of the department, Superintendent **Walter R. Hundley**, was a longtime City employee who in 1977 became the first African American to head a large parks department in the country.

The Department was also lucky to have the services of **Willis L. Ball**, a recreation manager from the mid-1960s until 1987. Willis was the first African American graduate of Western Washington University in Bellingham, where he starred on the football team.

In addition to staff contributions, numerous Seattle parks are named after prominent African Americans. These include:

Al Larkins Park: after the Seattle teacher and jazz musician
Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park: after a noted local physician and first medical director of Odessa Brown Clinic

Edwin T. Pratt Park: after the slain Seattle civil rights leader and executive director of the Seattle Urban League

Flo Ware Park: after the Central Area activist dedicated to education, health care, care for the elderly and jobs for the poor

Medgar Evers Swimming Pool: after the renowned Mississippi-based civil rights leader

Powell Barnett Park: after the pioneering black coal miner and community leader who first came to Seattle in 1906

Prentis I. Frazier Park: after the successful businessman and community newspaper publisher

Sam Smith Park: after the long-time state representative and first black person elected to the Seattle City Council

Judge Charles M. Stokes Overlook: in honor of the late judge who was the first African American elected to the State Legislature from King County and the first African American elected to Seattle District Court

William Grose Park: after the black pioneer hotelier and restaurateur who arrived in Seattle in the 1850s.

Yesler CC Completed

Mayor Nickels, community members, and partner Seattle Housing Authority celebrated the grand opening of the new Yesler Community Center on Feb. 12.

The long-awaited "full-service" community center, which replaces the small and aging former center, is 20,000 square feet in size and includes parking, a gym, multipurpose room, a play area, a commercial kitchen, computer room and rooms for child care, arts and crafts, fitness and more.

Funded by \$6.6 million from the 1999 Community Center Levy, the center also features a "green" design and construction, including natural lighting and ventilation.



Yesler CC

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Continued from page 1

- Coaching youth and teens in track and field and providing academic tutoring
- Regularly speaking to students about the recreation/athletics profession
- Giving motivational talks to youth and teens
- Training youth sports officials
- Developing relationships to enhance youth opportunities with the Seattle Seahawks, Seattle Sonics, University of Washington, Seattle Pacific University and Seattle University

The 12-member Sports Advisory Council meets monthly to share its expertise on various sports policies, programs and facilities.

This is the fourth year Parks has awarded the John C. Little Spirit Award. Past recipients have been Pat Warberg, Elaine Dunn and Don Ganchorre.

Ken's Corner

Continued from page 1

and maintenance manager. Both have worked closely with ARC, Sarah most recently implementing the Pyramid project.

We obviously have big shoes to fill in the coming weeks, but we will work hard to make this difficult transition as smooth as possible.

In the meantime, we continue to focus on getting the job done and serving our customers. As many of you know, we've completed another new community center project, Yesler and are making good process on the other projects funded by the 1999 Community Center Levy. See the article on this page. For news about other Seattle Parks and Recreation projects, programs and events, please visit our web site at www.seattle.gov/parks — we update the site daily.



Ken Bounds, Superintendent

Special Events

Feb. 20 – March 6

Rainier Beach Pool closed for preventative maintenance

April 23

Wheelchair Sports Jamboree at Chief Sealth High School

Credits

Anna Martin, ARC Board President; Bill Keller, ARC Executive Director; David Takami, Editor; Margarite Hargrave, Designer. For information or comments please call or e-mail David Takami at 206-684-8020, david.takami@seattle.gov

Pyramid Deployment in Full Swing!

by Kim Isenberg

Program registration and cash handling just got a whole lot easier at Ravenna Eckstein-Community Center.

Ravenna-Eckstein was the first on the initial group of 10 community centers to "go live" on the CLASS software system on Monday, Jan. 10. The Pyramid Project, a joint ARC and Parks endeavor to convert the Department to CLASS, will automate registration, facility booking and "point-of-sale" functions in all facilities.

Ravenna-Eckstein staff couldn't be happier with the new system. "The process is so much more simplified, as it is all one system - no separate credit card machine and no cash register," Michio Imanaka observed.

"It takes some getting used to, but it's so much easier to use," enthused Penny Atwood. "I like it better than RecWare, and I like it because it's Windows."

Jefferson Community Center went live on Jan. 18, and Rainer Beach on Jan. 24. Training for staff at Bitter Lake, Magnolia and Hiawatha took place on Feb. 1 and 2 for implementation in February. Alki, Montlake, Garfield and Laurelhurst community centers are scheduled for March.

The project team has already learned valuable lessons from the deployment to the first three sites. We recognize that site staff need a lot of preparation and training prior to implementation. Although the deployment team has been working feverishly to prepare the database for upcoming sites, train staff, and provide onsite support for implementation, we have been unable to spend lots of time with sites explaining how to organize this data. To help improve the implementation process, Christopher Williams and Robert Stowers have added staff support for deployment preparation.

The new system involves the CLASS software application and a desktop computer that serves as both a cash drawer and a stand alone computer. The automated system supports the sale of items, streamlines the facility booking process, and processes program registrations.

"The efficiencies that this system can provide for staff,



Meadowbrook CC

and the ability to provide up-to-date information and access to our customers will be a huge improvement for our Department," noted Operations Director Christopher Williams. "Automated registration systems are an industry standard for professional parks and recreation agencies across the country. The new system will bring us into the 21st century."

The deployment of the CLASS application to all Parks and Recreation facilities will help improve customer service by providing customers with more information and the ability to register for any program in the city at any site, over the

phone, or on the web.

Several phases of the Pyramid rollout are slated over the next two years, with the goal of every site having access to the system by the end of 2006.

Short Takes

Race and Social Justice grant to Langston Hughes:

Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center received a \$4,000 award from the Department of Neighborhood's Race and Social Justice initiative. The funds will be used to produce a Hip Hop concert in late October that will showcase urban minority voices.

Fitness Room at Loyal Heights: In an effort to increase opportunities for senior adults to exercise, the fitness room at the Loyal Heights Community Center has undergone a major transformation with help of several partners including: the Loyal Heights CC Advisory Council; Senior Adult Program and instructors; and Sports Art Fitness Community Service volunteers.

Holiday Banquet at Meadowbrook CC: The Holiday Banquet held at Meadowbrook Community Center in December was a grand success with 50+ disabled participants enjoying holiday desserts and great entertainment. The event has become so popular that a larger space will be needed next year! Thanks to Meadowbrook and their staff, and to the Specialized Programs Advisory Council and staff for their hard work.

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